



# Brent Virtual School for Looked After Children

## Annual Report 2015/16

February 2017



## Contents

1. Purpose of the Annual Report.....	2
2. Key Messages from the 2015/16 Data.....	2
3. Role of the Brent Virtual School and the Virtual Headteacher .....	3
4. Brent Virtual School Members .....	4
5. Brent’s Looked After Children Population 2015/16: Nursery to Year 11 .....	5
6. SEND .....	8
7. Brent’s Looked After Children’s Attainment 2015/16 .....	8
8. Early Years (Non Statutory) Provision 2015/16 .....	9
9. Year 1 Phonics Test.....	9
10. Key Stage 1 Statutory Attainment.....	9
11. Key Stage 2 Statutory Attainment 2015/16.....	10
12. Key Stage 4 Statutory Attainment 2015/16.....	11
13. Key Stage Five Attainment 2015/16 .....	13
14. Destinations of LAC at 16+ .....	13
15. Exclusions.....	14
16. Monitoring Attendance .....	14
17. Pupil Premium Grant.....	15
18. Training and Advice .....	16
19. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) .....	16
20. Celebrating Achievement.....	17
21. LAC Enrichment.....	17
22. Current Service Plan for Brent Virtual School.....	18
Appendix 1	Arvon Writer’s Bloc Report
Appendix 2	Attachment and LegoTheraplay Training Report
Appendix 3	PEP Feedback from Brent Care in Action Group (June 2016)
Appendix 4	BVS Service Plan 2016/17.

## 1. Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this annual report is to outline the activity and impact of the Brent Virtual School during the academic year 2015-16. The report includes details of the educational outcomes of our Brent looked after children who had been in care for a year or more. It reflects on the impact of our activities and identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for our looked after children.

Data contained in this report is for looked after children who were in the care of the Brent Council for the academic year 2015/16. The 2016 end of Key Stage assessment data relates only to those children in care in Brent for a year or more. The national LAC comparison data included in this report is from 2014/15<sup>1</sup>. National, validated LAC data includes only children who have been in care for a year or more and because of our small numbers of eligible children in each cohort our outcomes did not feature in the 2015 national LAC data. ***Please also note that because of significant changes to national assessment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, including the removal of national curriculum levels, comparison of LAC outcomes from previous years is not valid and has therefore not been included.***

The Annual Report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee on 07.02.2017.

## 2. Key Messages from the 2015/16 Data<sup>2</sup>

- 24% of LAC in Brent in compulsory education in 2015/16 had been in care for less than a year
- 20% of LAC in Brent were aged 15-17 years and 68% were aged 12-17 years
- PEP completion rates continued to improve in 2015/16 and an audit conducted in June 2016 showed a considerable improvement in quality. During 2015/16 the format of the electronic PEP was thoroughly revised to produce a more 'user friendly' and efficient document. Current PEP completion for the Autumn Term 2016 is 96%
- The Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) results for those in care for a year or more (4 children) exceeded the national outcomes for all children in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. In 2015 Brent's KS1 LAC outcomes were well below the Outer London average
- The Key Stage 2 (11 year olds) cohort comprised 8 children. Of this 8, 4 (50%) achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics: 3% below the national outcome (53%). In 2015 Brent's KS2 LAC outcomes were well above the Outer London average of 69%
- The Key Stage 4 (15 year olds) results were our best for a few years. 17% (3 children) of an eligible cohort of 18 achieved 5A\*-C grades, including English and Mathematics. This is in line with the 2015 national KS4 outcomes for LAC: 13% in England and 15% in Outer London
- The post-16 EET data (in education, employment and training) was positive. In July 2016, 48 of the total cohort of 51 (94%) had a September Guarantee<sup>3</sup>. However the current EET figure in Year 12 (January 2017) is down to 81%; the 11 young people currently NEET (not in education, employment and training) are receiving intensive support from BVS. The Year 12 cohort comprises 58 LAC
- Attendance: 88%; a decline of 2% from 2014/15. This is concerning due mainly to poor

<sup>1</sup> National attainment data for LAC will be available in May 2017. This Annual Report will then be updated accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> The examination data in this section is based on the numbers of LAC eligible to be included in our reported data

<sup>3</sup> The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008.

- attendance in KS4. Higher numbers of LAC in KS4 also affects this average
- Permanent Exclusion in 2015/16: 0. However fixed term exclusions rose in 2015/16
- Following Brent's Ofsted inspection in October 2015 BVS has been working to a post-Ofsted action plan that in particular focused on improving the completion and quality of PEPs (see above) and the raising of LAC outcomes at KS4 which in 2016 were a considerable improvement. However it must be noted that LAC cohorts vary significantly from year to year making a continuous upward improvement in outcomes impossible to sustain.

### **3. Role of the Brent Virtual School and the Virtual Headteacher**

#### **Role of the Brent Virtual School**

The Virtual School in Brent (BVS) has the overall responsibility for the monitoring, supporting and provision of interventions to ensure that looked after children (LAC) achieve the best possible educational outcomes. BVS strives to achieve this by:

- Co-ordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans (PEP)
- Monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of Pupil Premium in line with DfE guidance
- Tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of LAC
- Using tracking data to highlight individuals who are not on target to achieve their predicted outcomes and providing them with additional educational support.
- Ensuring Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) needs are identified and supported appropriately, including applications for statutory assessment
- Implementing a range of targeted interventions to raise academic standards
- Providing support and challenge to LAC, schools and carers, ensuring that expectations around achievement are high
- Ensuring effective transition between schools or specialist providers
- Encouraging LAC to have high aspirations about their futures and helping to remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for foster carers, designated teachers, school governors and bespoke training for alternative learning providers and staff in schools
- Encouraging LAC and their carers to engage in a wide range of enrichment activities
- Providing education updates for the various LAC and Permanency Panels and reminding our social work colleagues of the importance of education
- Celebrating LAC achievements.

#### **Role of the Brent Virtual Headteacher**

The concept of the 'Virtual School Headteacher' for Children Looked After was first outlined in the White Paper 'Care Matters: Time for Change' (DCSF, June 2007). Directors of Children's Services have a statutory responsibility to make sure that their local authority promotes the educational achievement of the children they look after, regardless of where they are placed.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amended section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and placed a statutory duty on all local authorities to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) to promote the educational achievement of its Looked After Children. It is the responsibility of the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to ensure that these duties are met.

The VSH role in Brent Council is held by Janet Lewis and is a strategic role that can influence practice and the use of resources across the authority.

The role was expanded in the DfE document 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children, statutory guidance for local authorities' July 2014. This document prescribes clearly

that:

- VSHs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively
- VSHs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after (including those placed and educated out of county)
- VSHs must maintain an up to date roll of their Local Authority's Looked After Children who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress
- VSHs must inform headteachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the VSH's local authority
- Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating each child's PEP (personal education plan) and ensuring that identified needs are met
- Ensure up to date, effective and high quality PEPs focus on educational outcomes and that all Looked After Children, wherever they are placed, have an effective PEP
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment of Looked After Children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

Following a re-structure of Brent's Children and Young People Department in early 2016 the post of Headteacher of BVS was confirmed as a Head of Service post in its own right. The BVS Headteacher is also a regular member of the borough's Fostering Panel.

#### **4. Brent Virtual School Members**

##### **2015/16**

Janet Lewis, Headteacher

Susan Lofthouse, Interim Deputy Headteacher (01.04.15-31.01.16)

Priya Upadhyaya, LAC Information Analyst

Nayna Joshi, KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher

Anna Lewis, Interim KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher (from 01.01.16 until 31.10.16)

Margaret Curtin, KS3 LAC Advisory Teacher

Emma Gavin, KS1 and 2 and Early Years LAC Advisory Teacher

Elizabeth Hannah, LAC Educational Psychologist (0.6)

Ben Kwofie, Year 11 LAC Life Coach, Connexions Team (until 30.03.16).

##### **2016/17**

Janet Lewis, Headteacher

Sarah Miller, Deputy Headteacher (from 01.09.16)

Priya Upadhyaya, LAC Information Analyst

Nayna Joshi, KS4 LAC Advisory Teacher

Margaret Curtin, KS3 LAC Advisory Teacher

Emma Gavin, KS1 and 2 and Early Years LAC Advisory Teacher

Elizabeth Hannah, LAC Educational Psychologist (0.6)

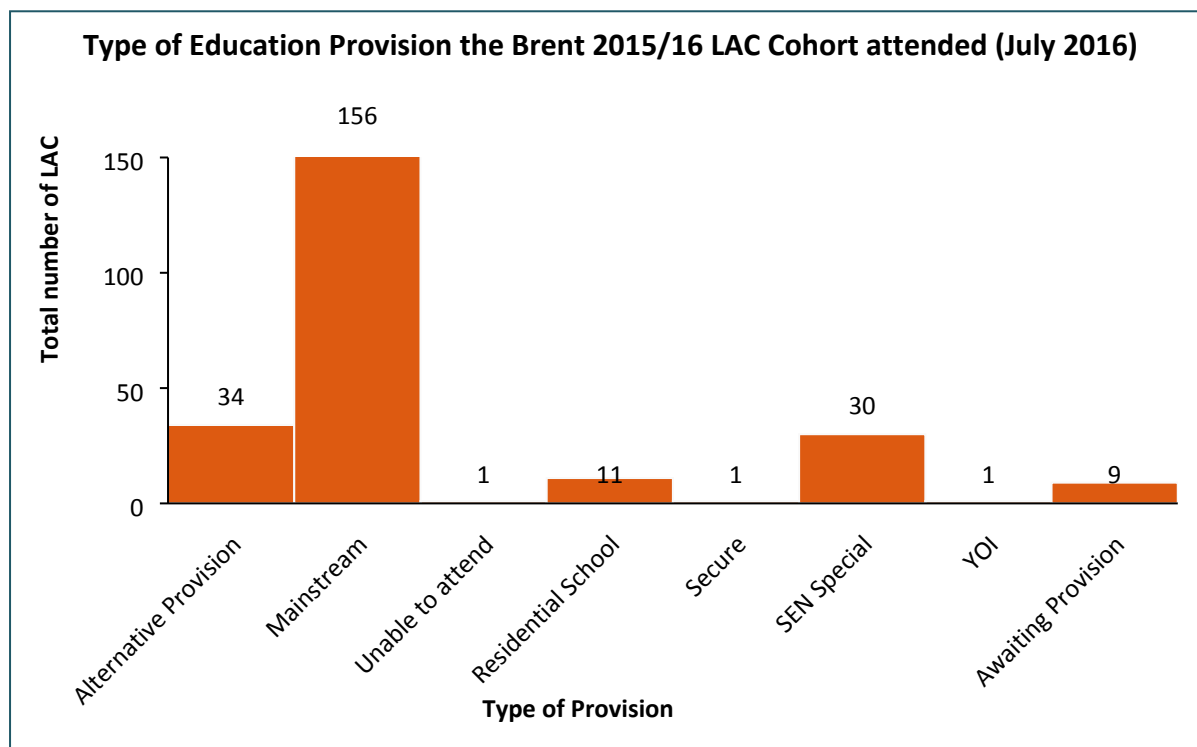
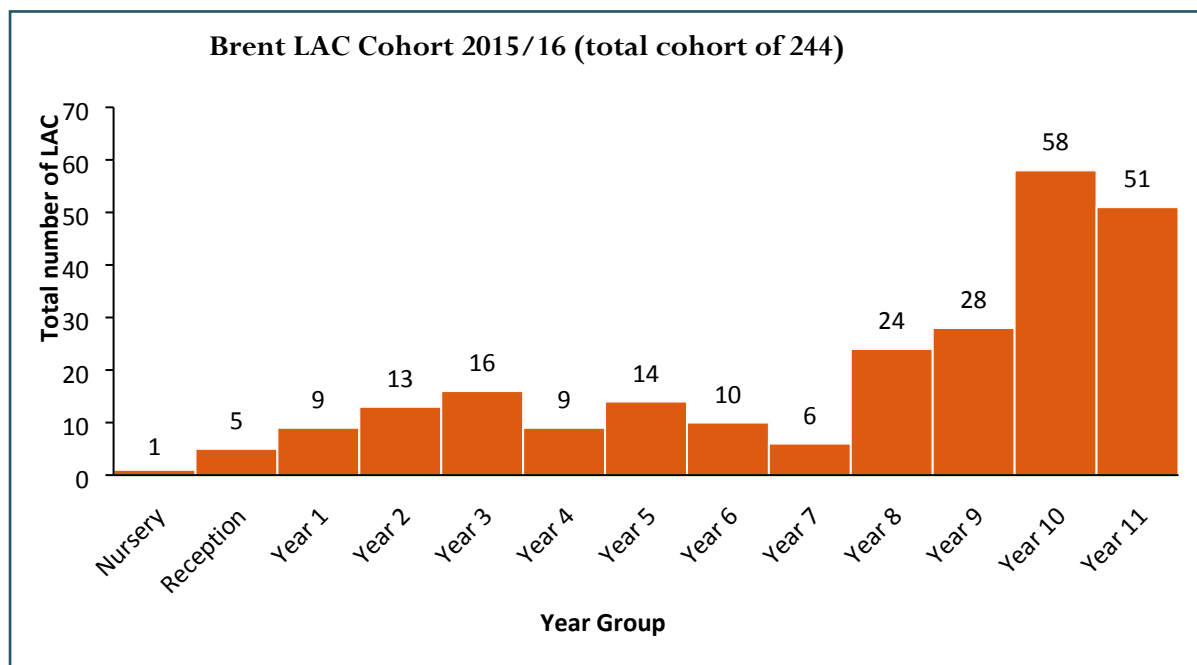
Ben Kwofie, Year 11 LAC Life Coach, Connexions Team (until 30.03.17).

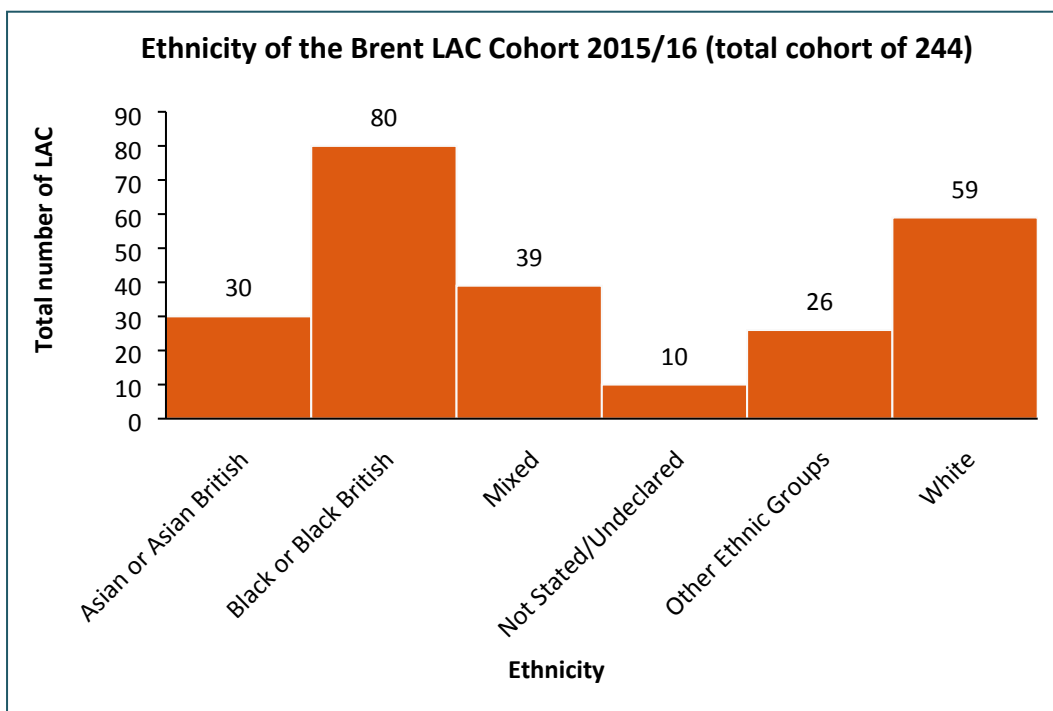
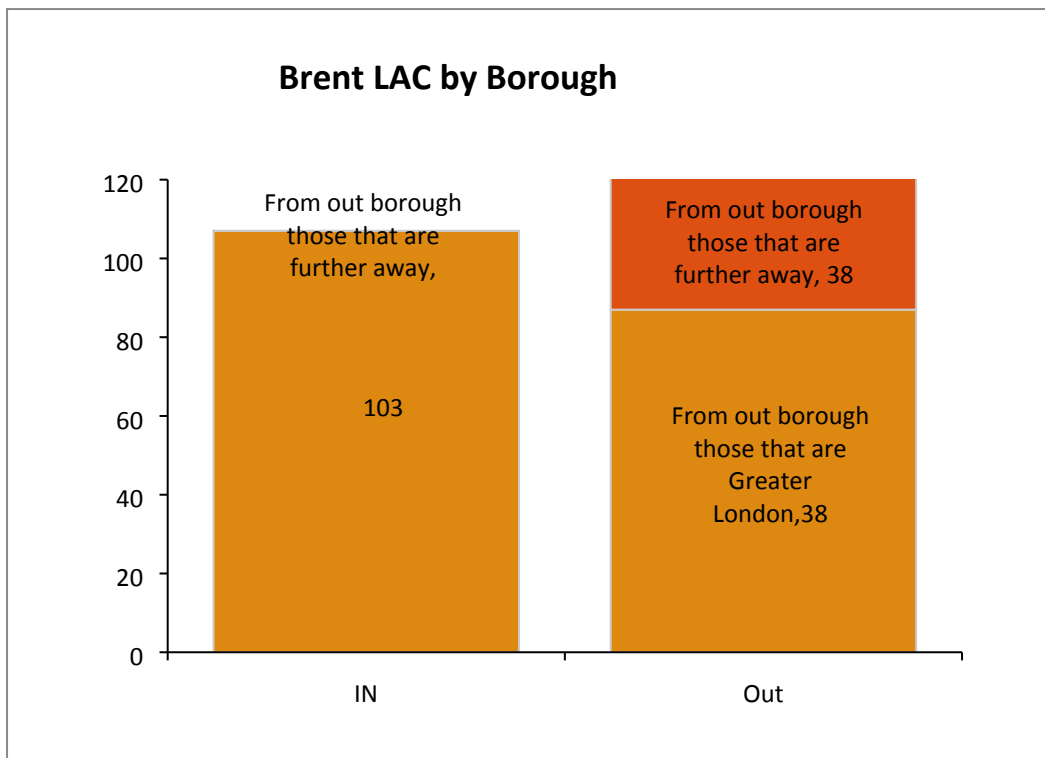
The Virtual School is currently governed by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Following 3 external application rounds between March 2015 and May 2016 BVS finally appointed a substantive Deputy Headteacher, Sarah Miller, who joined the team in September 2016. Sarah brings a wealth of LAC and senior school leadership experience and is already making a significant difference to the range and quality of interventions in place to support LAC preparing for end of KS2 and 4 assessments.

## 5. Brent's Looked After Children Population 2015/16: Nursery to Year 11

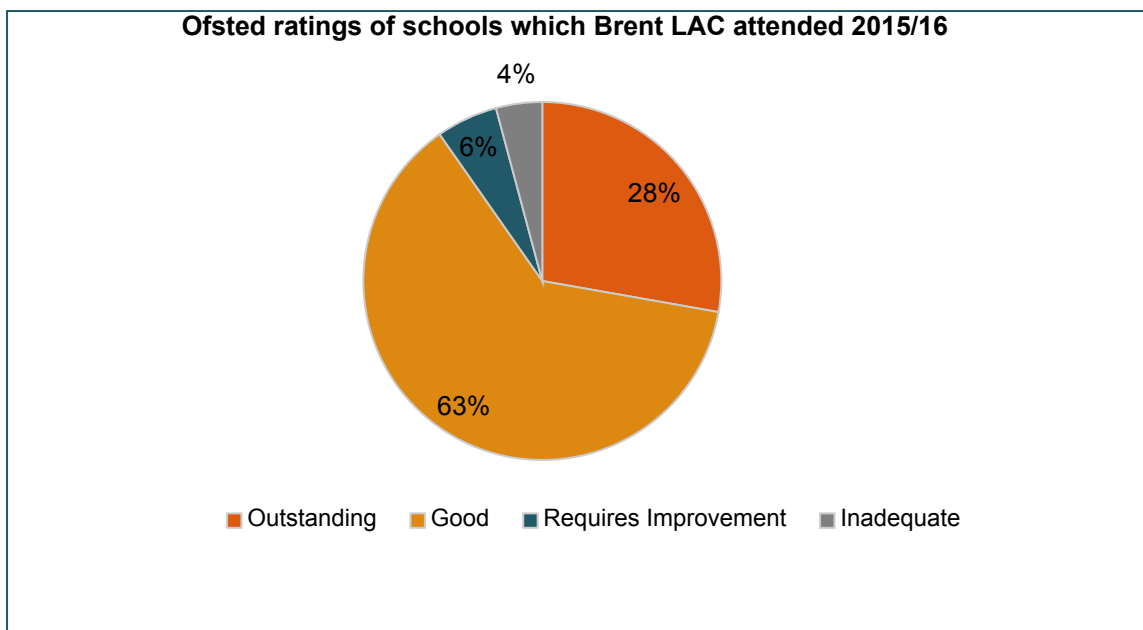
In July 2016 244 (Nursery- Year 11) children were looked after, 107 attending Brent schools and 125 attending schools outside the borough. Of these 125, 87 were in schools in greater London, with the remainder placed outside London, some at a significant distance.





The ethnic breakdown of the 2015/16 LAC cohort broadly reflects that of the general Brent school population.

In 2015/16 90% of statutory school aged LAC attended schools that were Ofsted rated as good or outstanding, 6% (12 LAC) attended schools that required improvement and 4% (9 LAC) attended an inadequate school. BVS works hard to get our LAC into the best possible school. During 2015/16 we asked the Secretary of State to direct an academy in Brent to admit a Year 10 LAC. This process took about 6 weeks to complete.



BVS monitors the progress and achievement of all LAC paying particular attention to those placed in schools that are less than 'good'.

### **LAC Not In School**

At any-time there are a few children or young people who are not in school or an appropriate alternative provision. This will be for a number of reasons: newly arrived from abroad as an unaccompanied minor with no age assessment, change of care placement making it impossible for the child or young person to attend their current school or disengagement by the young person. Where a young person disengages, BVS works with social work colleagues and schools to plan programmes to support re-engagement. Mentoring often plays a critical role in this process.

BVS monitors this roll of LAC not in school weekly and works closely with social workers and carers to secure appropriate provision. The average time to get a child or young person into school is 4 weeks. In the meantime BVS arranges 1:1 tuition funded by the Pupil Premium Grant.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)**

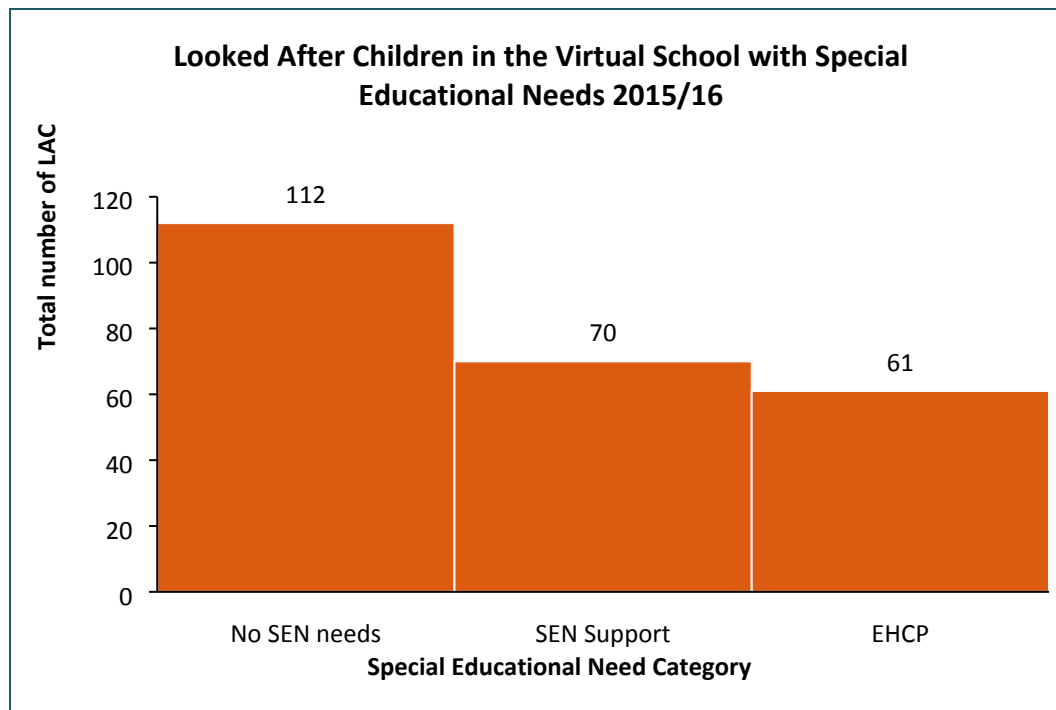
Over the past 2 years Brent has seen a significant rise in the number of UASC in care. In 2014/15 the Nursery to Year 11 LAC cohort comprised 16% UASC and in 2015/16 UASC comprised 23% of the LAC cohort.

Brent UASC come from a range of countries outside the EU, principally Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania and countries in Africa. Often they arrive without proof of age which can hamper a school admission. The majority of the UASC are in KS4 and if they are in care in the borough once their age has been agreed will be placed in the ESOL projects which are based at Queens Park and Claremont Schools. As their English improves they will be moved on to other schools in the borough. UASC in care outside Brent are referred to the relevant ESOL provision in their local area.

However it is unlikely that if they arrive in the UK during KS4 they will be eligible or able to follow GCSE courses. On the positive side many of our UASC are highly motivated to learn and some do extremely well. However they often face challenges regarding the right to remain in the UK and access to public funds once they become 18.

## 6. SEND

65% of the 2015/16 LAC cohort had identified SEND needs compared with 12% nationally. 28% had Education Health Care Plan (EHC plan) compared with 3% nationally; the same percentages as 2014/15. BVS tries where possible to combine annual reviews of statements or EHC Plans with PEP meetings. SEND and the meeting of these needs is a significant barrier to learning for many of our LAC.



Please note that the above graph represents LAC in Reception - Year 11

## 7. Brent's Looked After Children's Attainment 2015/16

Monitoring and improving outcomes for Brent LAC is a key priority for the BVS and although LAC numbers are relatively small, national and regional comparisons allow an understanding of educational and other outcomes achieved for children for which Brent Council are responsible as the corporate parent. Outcomes are reported for LAC who have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months up to and including 31 March 2016. Data is collated from the annual LAC return (SSDA903) and matched to attainment and school census data<sup>4</sup>.

**Please note that new assessment measures have recently been introduced at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and that National Curriculum Levels no longer exist. Instead at KS1 and 2 children are expected to achieve at least a scaled score of 100 to meet the expected standard. Therefore comparisons of 2016 KS1 and 2 outcomes with those attained in 2015 are not appropriate. The outcome measures at KS4 (GCSE) also changed in 2016. The old measure of 5A\*-C, including English and mathematics is no longer reported but for LAC purposes a comparison with 2015 GCSE outcomes is appropriate.**

<sup>4</sup> The national data included in this report is LAC only. Care must be taken when interpreting this information due to the small number of children and the volatility of these cohorts.

## 8. Early Years (Non Statutory) Provision 2015/16

1 LAC aged 2-4 years was eligible in 2015/16 to access nursery education.

### 2015/16 Statutory Attainment

The attainment of the Year 2 (Key Stage 1), 6 (Key Stage 2) and 11 (Key Stage 4) cohorts in 2015/16 is set out below. The national comparative data given is for 2015; the 2016 national data for LAC outcomes will not be released until May 2017.

## 9. Year 1 Phonics Test

The eligible cohort comprised 4 children of which 3 (75%) passed the test. The national average in 2016 was 81%. 2 further children re-took and passed the test in Year 2.

## 10. Key Stage 1 Statutory Attainment

Assessment for pupils in this key stage is conducted in the academic year pupils turn 7.

In 2016 a new set of KS1 curriculum tests was introduced. Schools were required to administer 2 tests for English reading and 2 for Maths (arithmetic and reasoning) during May. There is also an optional test in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS).

At the end of KS1 teachers must make their teacher assessment judgements on reading, writing, mathematics and science for each eligible pupil using the interim teacher assessment framework. The outcomes were moderated locally. Schools are not obliged to publish the test results, and they are not reported to the government. However parents must be allowed access to their child's results on request.

In 2016 the LAC KS1 cohort comprised 13 children. Of that cohort only 4 children, eligible to take the tests, had been in care for more than a year.

KS1 TESTS for 2015-16 SFR Cohort (4 children)	Achieved Expected Standard	National Average All children
Reading, Writing and Maths	3 (75%)	60%
Maths	3 (75%)	73%
Reading	4 (100%)	74%
Writing	3 (75%)	66%

### Key Characteristics of the Cohort:

- 50% (2) were in Brent schools
- 75% (3) had a change of placement in KS 1
- 50% (2) had a change of school placement during KS1

Analysis of the children who did not achieve the expected standard in KS:

- 50% had a placement move and change of school in 2015/16
- 25% of the children had an EHCP and 50% of the children were on SEN Support
- All had significant emotional and social needs relating to their LAC status.

## 11. Key Stage 2 Statutory Attainment 2015/16

Assessment for pupils in this key stage is conducted in the academic year that pupils turn 11.

In 2016 there were significant changes to national assessment at the end of KS2. These were:

- New curriculum and assessments
- Expected standard higher than previous Level 4
- Tests in reading and maths reported as scaled scores, not levels, with an expected standard of a scaled score of 100
- Writing teacher assessment; must meet all statements at the standard and below.

**Please note that 2016 outcomes at KS2 cannot be compared with those of 2015.**

The headline accountability measures for schools are:

- % achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths
- % achieving high standard in reading, writing and maths
- Progress score in each of reading, writing and maths
- Average scaled score in each of reading and maths.

Nationally in 2016 53% met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. In 2015 80% achieved the expected standard of L4+.

In 2016 the LAC cohort comprised 10 children. 1 of these was a UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child) and not eligible to take the tests and 1 was out of year (ie a year older) who took the tests but will not be counted in Brent's official results.

<b>KS2 TESTS for 2015-16 SFR Cohort (8 children)</b>	<b>Achieved Expected Standard</b>	<b>National Average All Children</b>	<b>Brent Average All Children</b>
Reading, Writing and Maths	4 (50%)	53%	55%
Reading	5 (62.5%)	66%	
Writing	5 (62.5%)	74%	
Maths	5 (62.5%)	70%	
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling	3 (37.5%)		

- The KS2 cohort struggled to gain the expected standards across all subjects because they did not achieve the expected standard in the new Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (GPS) test, some missing the expected standard by very few marks
- 90 % of children who did not achieve the expected standard in a subject had scored 94 points or above
- Of the children who did not achieve all the expected standards, 57 % had an EHCP or Statement and 43% were on SEN Support.

### **Key Characteristics of the Cohort:**

- 63% (5) were in Brent schools
- 63% (5) had at least 1 change of school placement during KS2
- 63% (5) had at least 1 change of care placement during KS2
- 88% (7) were identified as having SEND with 50% (4) with EHC Plans.

1 LAC had been out of school since February 2016; arrangements were made for him to take the tests with his previous school.

### **BVS Interventions and support for the Year 6 Cohort:**

- 2 Easter holiday booster class days
- 1:1 tuition for children who needed to close the gaps in particular subjects
- Enrichment activities: visits to the Science Museum, the Roald Dahl Museum and author workshop, Wembley Legends Day, Thoughts and Sports week
- Primary/secondary transition training for foster carers
- Pre-PEP transition meetings with secondary schools
- Ensuring children who were out of school could sit their KS2 assessments
- Learning Mentors to support with transitions and placement moves.

### **Rates of Progress from KS1**

- 25% of children exceeded expected rates of progress in Reading, Writing and Maths
- 37.5% exceeded the expected rates of progress in Reading and Maths
- 50% made the expected rate of progress across Reading, Writing, GPS and Maths
- 25% of children made the expected rate of progress in Reading
- 37.5% made expected rates of progress in Writing
- 25% of children made the expected progress in Maths
- 37.5 % made the expected rate of progress in GPS.

Children who do not reach the expected standard in KS2 are eligible for Year 7 Catch-Up funding in their first year at secondary school. BVS has ensured that additional support is being provided for our Year 7 LAC who did not reach the expected standards and this support is documented in their Autumn Term 2016 PEP.

## **12. Key Stage 4 Statutory Attainment 2015/16**

Assessment for these pupils is conducted in the academic year pupils turn 16.

From 2016 assessment at KS4 places more emphasis on the progress of pupils and across a broader range of subjects than previously.

The headline accountability measures for schools in 2016:

- Progress 8 (progress in 8 qualifications)
- Attainment 8 (attainment in 8 qualifications)
- % achieving A\*-C in English and maths
- % achieving the EBacc
- % entering the EBacc
- Destinations (% staying in education or training at post-16).

The 2016 Year 11 LAC cohort comprised a total of 51 pupils. Only 23 of this cohort had been in care for more than a year. A further 5 of these were not eligible to take GCSE. The SFR cohort was 18. Currently BVS is only able to report outcomes using the previous KS4 performance measure of 5A\*-C grades including English and mathematics.

<b>OUTCOME MEASURE for 2015-16 SFR KS4 Cohort (18)</b>	<b>Brent</b>	<b>LAC National 2015</b>	<b>National Average 2015 All Pupils</b>
5A*-C grades incl En and ma	3 (17%)	13%	60%

Comparative national LAC data will be published in May 2017. The London network of virtual school headteachers has shared some 2016 KS4 data. Croydon and Newham 2 of our statistical neighbour boroughs reported 15% and 13% 5A\*-C grades including English and mathematics.

In 2014 the eligible Year 11 Brent LAC cohort achieved 9% 5A\*-C incl En and ma and 0% in 2015.

#### **Key Characteristics of the Cohort:**

- 28% (5) were in Brent schools
- 33% (6) had a placement change in Year 11
- 11% (2) had a school change in Year 11
- 61% (11) were identified as having SEND with 22% (4) with EHC Plans.

#### **Levels of Attainment and Progress at Key Stages 2 and 4**

At Key Stage 4, new measures: Attainment and Progress 8 will replace the old measure of 5A\*-C including English and mathematics with measures that reflect pupils' attainment and progress in 8 prescribed subjects in single scores. A similar attainment and progress scale scored approach is used to report KS2 outcomes.

Currently we are unable to report our LAC outcomes at KS2 and 4 in this way. The DfE is engaged in work with the new National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) to introduce national progress comparative data for LAC.

Work on monitoring current LAC progress is a main part of our work in BVS, using termly data drops collected by Welfare Call (the company that provides our electronic Personal Education Plans: PEPs). Such monitoring is enabling us quickly to identify LAC at risk of under-achievement, to challenge schools and to work with the Designated Teachers in schools to provide appropriate individual support and adapt PEPs as appropriate.

#### **Context and Impact on Outcomes**

The educational attainment of LAC is measured against the educational attainment of all children. The majority of LAC face challenges and barriers to their overall achievement that the majority of other children do not.

Last year's BVS Annual Report reflected widely on the context and reasons why LAC, despite matching the same cognitive ability range as the rest of the pupil population, do so poorly by national attainment measures. The report highlighted the impact that changes of care placement and possible school changes can have on academic progress and achievement. Recent research into LAC attainment showed a close correlation between high attainment and good school attendance in a stable school placement especially across a key stage supported by a stable care placement.

The analysis highlighted also the significantly higher percentages of SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) in the LAC population and the higher number of risk factors for LAC:

- 60% of LAC experience emotional and mental health problems: 4 times higher than children generally
- 66% of LAC have at least 1 physical health issue; are 3 times more likely to drink alcohol and/or smoke; 4 times more likely to take illegal drugs; more likely to become teenage parents
- Over 25% of LAC have an EHC Plan compared with only 3% of all pupils.

Brent's LAC reflect these national statistics. In addition the majority of Brent's LAC come into care between the ages of 11-16 at a time when the challenges faced by young people are more intractable and are more likely to result in placement breakdown and change of education setting.

In 2015/16 BVS began to highlight the growing international awareness of the impact that poor attachment in the early years of a child can have on developing brains and on a child's and young person's emotional capability and this work is continuing. BVS is making use of international research led by Harvard University focusing on key aspects of child

development including: early experiences and how they affect the development of brain architecture, toxic stress and the development of resilience which is critical to academic engagement and motivation. LAC, because of neglect and/or abuse in early childhood, are more likely to suffer long term consequences in terms of their ability to learn and form relationships. Their behavior which at times can be extreme and put them at risk of school exclusion is often directly related to these early attachment issues. Please visit <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/> for more details and helpful video presentations.

BVS is now attempting to educate schools about these issues and to encourage them to adopt attachment aware ways of interacting with our LAC which will be supportive rather than punitive. In particular it is funding, through the retained Pupil Premium Grant, Attachment and LegoTheraplay Training for schools. Please see Appendix 2 for further details of this training programme and the feedback received from schools. BVS is also planning a Conference in March 2017 on attachment that will feature a key note presentation by Dr Janet Rose a leading British researcher in this area. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are very welcome to attend on 9th March.

BVS is also for the first time from September 2016 using the Pupil Premium Grant to fund 3 schools in Brent; 2 secondary schools and a primary school which between them educate a significant number of our LAC, to receive CAMHs support through the Targeted Adolescent Mental Health Support (TAMHs), a school's resource which places a CAMHs counsellor in a school for a day or half a day a week. Initial feedback from the schools involved indicates that this resource is making a difference in helping our young people to understand and manage their emotions.

### **13. Key Stage Five Attainment 2015/16**

BVS did not have a dedicated post-16 advisory teacher resource in 2015/16. This was removed when the team was re-structured in 2013 going from a team of 6: a lead advisory teacher (deputy head of BVS) and 5 advisory teachers to a team of 4: a lead advisory teacher (deputy head of BVS) and 3 advisory teachers. The number of LAC has remained constant and the raising of the participation age by government to 18 has accentuated the need to ensure that post-16 LAC's educational progress is monitored and supported. From September 2016 following the appointment of a substantive Deputy Headteacher for BVS, the postholder together with the BVS Headteacher has been offering limited support to post-16 LAC; focusing particular of those who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

It is not possible at this time to present a coherent set of Year 12 and 13 outcomes for 2016. Work continues with social workers on compiling this information and we hope to have this fully in place by the end of the Spring Term.

### **14. Destinations of LAC at 16+**

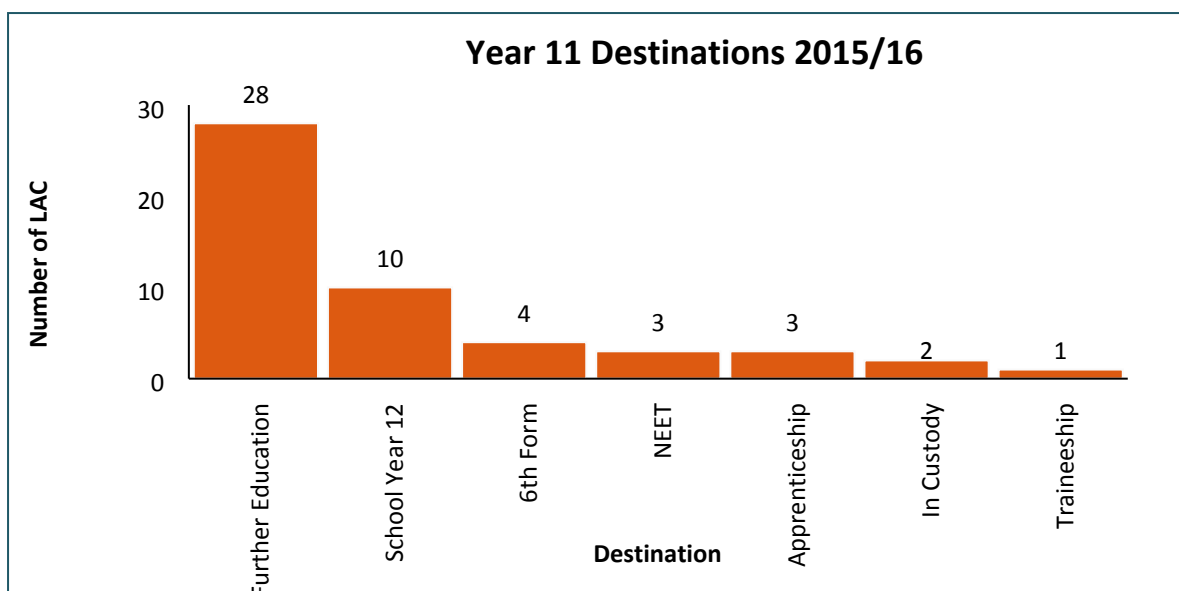
The education, employment and training (EET) status of LAC in the September following completion of Year 11.

#### **16+ LAC September Guarantees<sup>5</sup>**

By July 2016 48 out of a total of 51 year 11 LAC had a September Guarantee. The graph below breaks this down into specific destinations.

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<sup>5</sup> The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, of a suitable place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008.



The 3 LAC identified as NEET continue to receive individual support and guidance from the BVS Life Coach.

## 15. Exclusions

No Brent LAC were permanently excluded in 2015/16. Fixed term exclusions were higher than in 2014/15 in terms of number of days lost to exclusion.

Please see below summary table for exclusions

Exclusion Data <sup>6</sup>			
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total number of fixed term exclusions- days	190.5	253	300
Number of pupils excluded- fixed term	38	35	45
Total number of permanent exclusions	1	1	0

In 2015/16 a number of LAC were at risk of exclusion and a proportion of KS4 LAC were directed to alternative provision to address their behaviour by their mainstream school. 4 LAC in Year 11 were in Alternative Provisions. BVS aims to work closely with schools to avoid the permanent exclusion of our LAC where possible by helping schools to find appropriate alternative provision.

## 16. Monitoring Attendance

Maintaining regular school attendance is fundamental to a young person achieving their potential at school. BVS recognises that monitoring LAC attendance is a key activity.

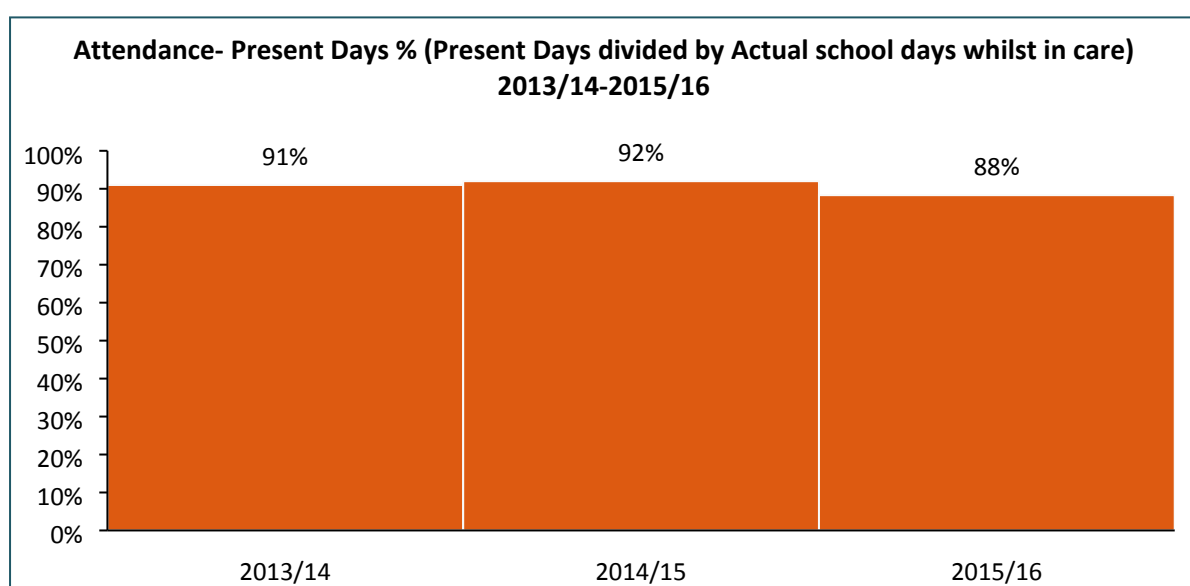
Since April 2012 the Welfare Call Service has been commissioned by the BVS to provide accurate data that enables it to monitor attendance, punctuality and exclusions for Brent LAC, wherever they live. The Welfare Call Service is used across the country by other local authorities and has an excellent track record in providing a variety of accurate [attendance/exclusion reports](#) and statistics on a daily basis.

<sup>6</sup> Please note that the figures included above are collected by Welfare Call.

An important aspect of the service is the daily call to each school attended by Brent LAC. Once an attendance issue is raised, the Welfare Call Service ascertains whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the type (e.g. medical, exclusion) as well as alerting both the social worker and the carer.

BVS is able to access regular datasets regarding young people's attendance at primary, secondary, special and residential schools across the country. Welfare Call reports are sent daily to BVS. If any unusual absences or significant concerns are noted, the relevant advisory teacher will send an alert to the social worker, their manager and any involved person, for further investigation.

Attendance for Brent LAC, although below national averages, had shown significant improvement over the past 2 years. It has declined again in 2015/16. This decline reflects the increased challenge presented by larger numbers of older children entering the care system. In many cases poor school attendance is engrained. However BVS is not complacent about this and is continuously looking at ways to support better LAC school attendance.



## 17. Pupil Premium Grant

The Pupil Premium grant (PPG) for Brent LAC (£1900pa per LAC) is managed by the Headteacher of BVS.

The DfE provides the PPG on a financial year basis. In 2015/16 and 2016/17 BVS received £600,400 based on 316 LAC. The academic year spans 5 12ths of 1 financial year and 7 12ths of the following financial year.

BVS' policy is to provide schools with £1300 per LAC made in 1 annual payment in arrears; the £600 balance is retained for centrally funded support. Schools are asked to attach PPG spend to PEP targets which is then agreed by BVS as part of the quality assurance process of PEPs. Schools can bid for the whole £1900; each bid is approved on its merits.

In 2015/16 the retained, cumulative, balance funded the following BVS activity:

- Life Coach Ben Kwofie supporting Post-16 transition
- Easter Holiday and summer Half Term revision sessions for Year 6 and Year 11 LAC both in Brent and elsewhere
- Additional 1:1 tuition, mentoring sessions and additional support to a number of

individual LAC who were not in school for a variety of reasons or were between schools due to foster placement changes

- Attachment Training for schools provided by a national trainer.

The impact of PPG on individual LAC outcomes is variable and sometimes it is difficult to link the funding to specific improvements. BVS works hard to hold schools to account for how LAC PPG is spent and recently has been directing more funding towards helping schools understand and then address the reasons why LAC tend to underperform.

The impact of the Year 11 Life Coach, funded by PPG, continues to make a significant contribution to the support our Year 11 LAC receive in helping them to make a positive post-16 transition.

## 18. Training and Advice

The Virtual School staff group provide training sessions to:

- Designated Teachers (termly DT forum sessions)
- Foster Carers (bi-annually)
- Fostering Team
- Safeguarding Teams
- LAC Teams in schools
- Newly employed Social Workers.

The content of these training sessions includes, PEP and PPG processes, attachment disorders and strategies, school application and admission processes, expected roles and responsibilities.

During 2015/16 members of BVS provided the following training:

- ePEP training
- Care Planning Staff Forum Training
- Brent Governors' Forum Training
- Foster Carer Training
- Social Worker Induction Training
- Social Care Staff Forum Training
- Designated Teacher Forum: Attachment and ePEP Training.

BVS will be working closely with the new substantive Head of LAC and Permanency (arriving February 2017) to ensure that social workers receive appropriate and timely training on how to hold schools to account for the progress and attainment of Brent LAC.

## 19. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

PEPs are statutory and when done well are a key driver of LAC education improvement.

During 2015/16 further steps were taken to improve both the completion rate and overall quality of PEPs with the result that by the end of the Autumn Term 2016 96% of PEPs had been completed and all were rated good or better in terms of quality. The revision of the electronic PEP and enhanced training that focused on SMART targets has made a significant contribution to the improved quality. A PEP rated good or better should contain the following:

- Input by the child or young person about their education, what is helping them learn, what they would like further help with

- SMART targets that reflect the child's or young person's input
- Helpful comments and strategies based on the child's or young person's barriers to learning that will help staff meet their needs.

Moderation of PEP targets is held half termly and termly audits of PEPs are planned.

A key part of the revision of our PEP format and process was informed by the views of our young people. Please see Appendix 3: 'PEP Feedback from Brent Care in Action Group (June 2016)' for details of this feedback. Following the revision of the ePEP format BVS revised its guidance documentation and this was issued to Designated Teachers and social workers in September 2016.

Post 16 PEPS in 2015/16 were conducted by the Social Work teams.

## **20. Celebrating Achievement**

Each year BVS organises a celebration event for LAC and invites nominations to recognise the achievements of the children and young people. The event to celebrate achievement in 2015/16 was held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in the Grand Hall in Brent's Civic Centre. 153 children and young people were nominated by their social workers, carers or designated teachers to receive a certificate of achievement. Certificates and prizes were presented by the Mayor of Brent, the Cabinet Member for Education and the Strategic Director of Children and Young People in Brent. The event, as ever, was a joyful occasion with a wide range of achievements being recognised. For the first time BVS made some special Key Stage awards for outstanding achievement.

## **21. LAC Enrichment**

Following the re-structure of BVS in 2013 and the reduction in the team capacity enrichment activities declined. I am delighted to report that in 2015/16 the enrichment programme was revitalised and a number of our LAC benefitted from a wider range of activities. The programme for this academic year is even better. The feedback we receive from LAC following events helps us to shape future events.

During 2015/16, BVS supported LAC in a range of enrichment activities:

- The Letterbox Project – a literacy and numeracy project which promotes home learning. Feedback from pupils is very positive and foster carers report that receiving a book each month encourages greater interest in reading
- Arvon Writing Project, funded by the John Lyons' charity
- Visits to the Roald Dahl Museum and the Science Museum
- Thoughts for Sports Activity Week
- Visit to St John's College Cambridge for LAC and foster carers.

A recent successful bid to the John Lyons' charity means that more events are planned for this academic year. As ever such activities rely on the willingness of BVS Advisory Teachers to give up weekend and holiday time to support our LAC and I am delighted to say that the team are always happy to do this.

BVS is particularly keen to ensure that we are supporting our LAC to have the aspiration to progress to Higher Education. In 2017 we hope to be part of a DfE Innovations funded project 'New Beginnings' which is being sponsored by Lord Wills and will build on our visit in July 2016 to St John's College Cambridge.

## **22. Current Service Plan for Brent Virtual School**

The current BVS Service Plan is attached as Appendix 3. The priority for BVS is to secure a suitable post-16 resource both to support and prevent LAC from becoming NEET and to raise aspirations for Higher Education.

**Janet Lewis**  
**Headteacher Brent Virtual School**  
**February 2017.**